

MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES MINUTES

August 16, 2010 City Hall, Rm 209, 6:30 p.m.
1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Members Present:

Jane Brown
Jini Fairley
Rob Caruso, Co-Chair
Lucie Chansky
Jeff Hutter
Rosemary Larking
Barbara Lischinsky
Girard Plante, Co-Chair

Staff Present:

Kathleen Cahill, Community Development Senior Planner
Candace Havens, Interim Planning Director
Donalynn Kahn, City Solicitor
Amy Yuhasz, Associate Director of Housing and Community Development

Public Present:

Michael Lepie

G. Plante, Co-chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Mayor Warren attended the Mayor's Committee meeting to discuss accessibility, in general, in Newton.

The Committee discussed the mitigation work at Washington Street and Commonwealth Avenue. Plans for this work were implemented this year. The City Traffic Engineer made the Committee a commitment that funds leftover from signal work would be spent on accessible improvements (e.g. accessible pedestrian improvements and curb cuts). Members were concerned about the lack of priority given to these accessible improvements. The Mayor indicated that he would connect with Candace Havens, Interim Planning Director and Clint Schuckel, City Traffic Engineer to arrive at a solution.

The Committee's transition to a Commission was also discussed. The Committee has a couple different options with regard to this transition. One option is to create their own ordinance which would specify the number of members and the other option is to accept the state statute which would require a reduction in the current number of members. Members indicated that they would like to adopt the state statute. They realize that everyone will need to be rotated off the Committee at some

point to comply with the membership restrictions. Mayor Warren and Donalynn Kahn will connect with Chief Cummings to discuss handicapped parking violations and revenue.

Members also brought up their concern about a recommendation made by the Committee regarding handicapped parking spaces in Newtonville at Walnut Street. Although the Committee recommended that the spaces be located on either side of Walnut Street by the existing crosswalk one space was located on Madison Street. Candace Havens indicated that at Traffic Council issues arise that may not have come up in the original application. She will speak with David Koses, Transportation Planner to find out more about this decision.

The Committee asked Mayor Warren about when the short term repairs on the elevator were slated to be complete. Art Cabral estimates that these repairs will be made within the next two weeks. The Mayor will ask Art about heat in the vestibule – members mentioned that it gets extremely cold in the winter when waiting for the RIDE. Committee members also brought up the possibility of having wheelchairs available for visitors to City Hall who find it difficult to walk the long hallways. Mayor Warren agreed that this was a good idea. L. Chansky has a couple of wheelchairs that she is willing to donate to the City. She will bring them to the next meeting.

The ADA Transition Plan was also discussed. The Committee strongly believes that this Plan needs to be updated, particularly the inventory of ADA compliant/non-complaint public buildings and parks. A. Yuhasz and K.Cahill mentioned that CDBG funds are available to hire a consultant to complete the inventory portion of the plan. Mayor Warren also mentioned that the City will be hiring a Capital Planner soon who will be working on an assessment of public buildings. This is an exciting opportunity for the City to be a leader in this area. Mayor Warren, Candace Havens, and Amy Yuhasz will discuss the best way to go about the update of the transition plan.

Finally, the Committee discussed their desire to change the general culture towards people with disabilities in the City. The Committee and the Mayor will work together to develop educational opportunities with private business owners and the Chamber of Commerce.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.